

Enclosure 5c  
April 6, 2021

# Early Childhood Care and Education Strategic Plan

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Adopted in 2020 &  
Updated for 2021

**RHODE  
ISLAND**

The ECCE Strategic plan has five core objectives to ensure that all children are on a path to reading proficiently in third grade. RIDE is primarily responsible for Obj. 3

Vision: all children on a path to reading proficiently in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade

**Objective 1:**

Rhode Island’s early childhood programs meet high-quality standards for care and education as defined by our Quality Rating and Improvement System.

**Objective 2:**

Children and families can equitably access and participate in the early childhood care, services, and supports that will help them reach their potential and enter school healthy and ready to succeed.

**Objective 3:**

All four-year olds in Rhode Island have access to high-quality Pre-K, inclusive of parental choice and student needs. (This objective is being led by RIDE in partnership with the Governance Team.)

**Objective 4:** Secure the quality and delivery of ECCE through increased and sustainable funding and operational improvements.

**Objective 5:** Expand the depth and quality of family and child-level data accessible to and used by agencies, programs, and partners to drive decisions.

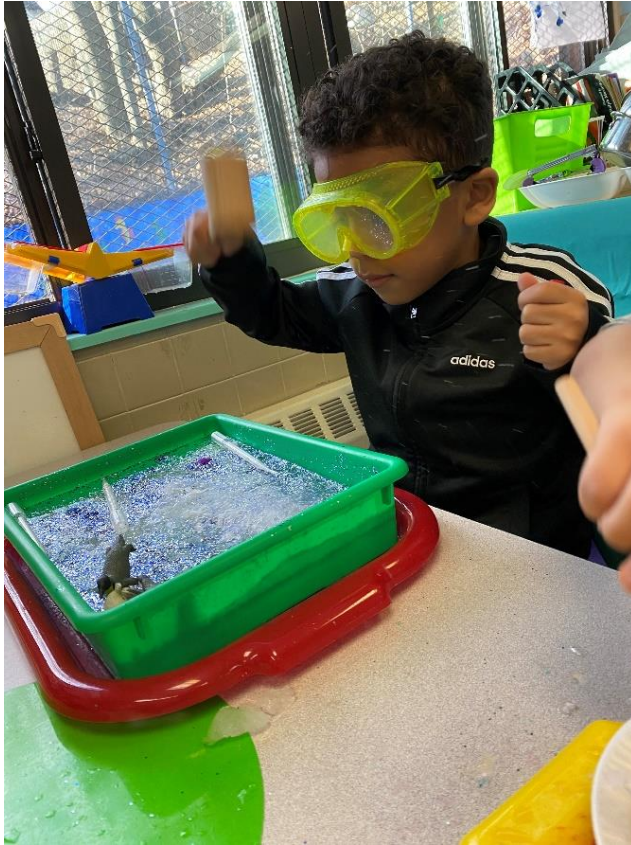
# Metrics

These five metrics will be our high-level measures of whether we are on track to increase the number of children ready for Kindergarten.

Objective	Lagging Metric
1. High quality early learning opportunities for children	% of CCAP children enrolled in 4- or 5-star providers
2. Equitable access to high quality services & supports	% improvement of vulnerable population participation rates in high-quality programs
3. Universal Pre-K access	# of 4 year olds enrolled in high-quality Pre-K
4. Sustainable system	\$ in new funding leveraged for ECCE purposes (state budget, federal funds, grants, etc)
5. Continuous improvement through integrated data	# of data elements that are integrated at the child level

# RI Pre-K

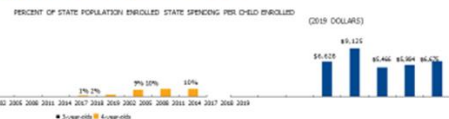
Funding for RI Pre-K comes from a blend of state and federal dollars, including PDG B-5 Renewal grant and GEER funding.





# RI Pre-K began in 2009 and has been ranked top in the Nation for quality by NIEER\* since 2010.

## Rhode Island



**OVERVIEW**  
Rhode Island preschool enrolled 1,080 children in 2018-2019, the same number as in 2017-2018. State funding totaled \$7,209,482, up 64% (32.12%), adjusted for inflation, since last year. State spending per child enrolled \$6,675 in 2018-2019, up 60% from 2017-2018, adjusted for inflation. Rhode Island met 30 of 30 quality standards benchmarks.

**WHAT'S NEW**  
The Rhode Island State Prekindergarten Program expanded by 240 seats for the 2019-2020 school year and began to brief funding with Federal Head Start funding. At the end of 2018, the Rhode Island Executive Office of Health and Human Services voted awarded a Preschool Development Grant both through Age Five Personal award for \$27 million over three years. Approximately \$2 million will be used each year to continue adding seats to high-quality Pre-K programs for 4-year-olds.

**BACKGROUND**  
The Rhode Island State Prekindergarten Program, launched in 2009, is provided in public schools, Head Start programs, and private child care. All children who turn 4 years old by September 1 and are living in participating communities are eligible for the program, but enrollment is determined by lottery.

The Rhode Island Department of Education oversees the pre-K program, which is funded through the Rhode Island school funding formula, approved in 2010. Using a phased-in approach, \$10 million is to be invested over 10 years to expand access to high-quality pre-K, beginning with communities with a high proportion of children eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.

In 2014, Rhode Island received a \$13 million Federal Preschool Development Grant (PDG) to expand access to its high-quality pre-K program. PDG funding was used to expand access in high-needs communities and to improve program monitoring, evaluation, and technical assistance. As a result of PDG support, enrollment nearly doubled between the 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 school years, and leveled off as planned in 2017-2018 and 2018-2019.

Teachers in the program must hold a bachelor's degree with an early childhood teaching certificate. The Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education provides training and technical assistance through a vendor to all staff on an ongoing basis. The Rhode Island Prekindergarten Program has been assessed for both process quality and program impact/child outcomes, including classroom quality and child outcomes in literacy, arithmetic, and social-emotional development. Additionally, a new evaluation of the program is underway, which will gauge child outcomes, measuring classroom quality and include an analysis of long-term costs.

ACCESS RANKINGS	RESOURCE RANKINGS	SOCIAL BENCHMARKS MET
4-YEAR-OLDS YEAR-CLOSING	STATE SPENDING ALL REPORTED SPENDING	
35	None Served	12
	3	10

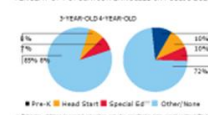
THE STATE OF RHODE ISLAND - STATE PRESCHOOL YEARBOOK - NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR EARLY EDUCATION RESEARCH - [WWW.NIEER.ORG](http://WWW.NIEER.ORG)

## RHODE ISLAND STATE PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAM

### ACCESS

Total state pre-K enrollment: 1,080  
School districts that offer state program: 28% (presumptive)  
Income requirement: No income requirement  
Minimum hours of operation: 6 hours/day; 3 days/week  
Operating schedule: School or academic year  
Special education enrollment, ages 3 and 4: 1,975  
Federally funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4: 1,377  
State-funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4: 130

### PERCENT OF POPULATION ENROLLED IN PUBLIC ECE



### QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST

POLICY OR PRE-K REQUIREMENT	BENCHMARK	REQUIREMENT MEETS BENCHMARK?
Early learning & development standards	Comprehensive, aligned, supported, culturally sensitive	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Curriculum supports	Approval process & supports	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Teacher degree BA/BA		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Teacher specialized training	ECE Specializing in pre-K	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Assistant teacher degree	MED + 12 ECE/ED credits (public); MED + 12 ECE/ED credits or a CDA (nonpublic)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Staff/professional	30 hours/year; PD plans; Coaching development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Maximum class size (3-4-year-olds)	20 or lower	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Staff-child ratio (3-4-year-olds)	1:10 or better	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Screening & referral	Vision, hearing & health screenings	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Continuous quality improvement system	Structured classroom observations; Data used for program improvement	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

For more information about the benchmarks, see the Executive Summary and Roadmap to State Profile Pages.

### RESOURCES

Total state pre-K spending: \$7,209,482  
Local match required? No  
State Head Start spending: \$1,190,000  
State spending per child enrolled: \$6,675  
All reported spending per child enrolled: \$11,754



\* Pre-K expenditures may include additional funds from federal or local sources that are not reported here.

Notes:

\*\* Head Start non-federal spending includes funding only for 3- and 4-year-olds.

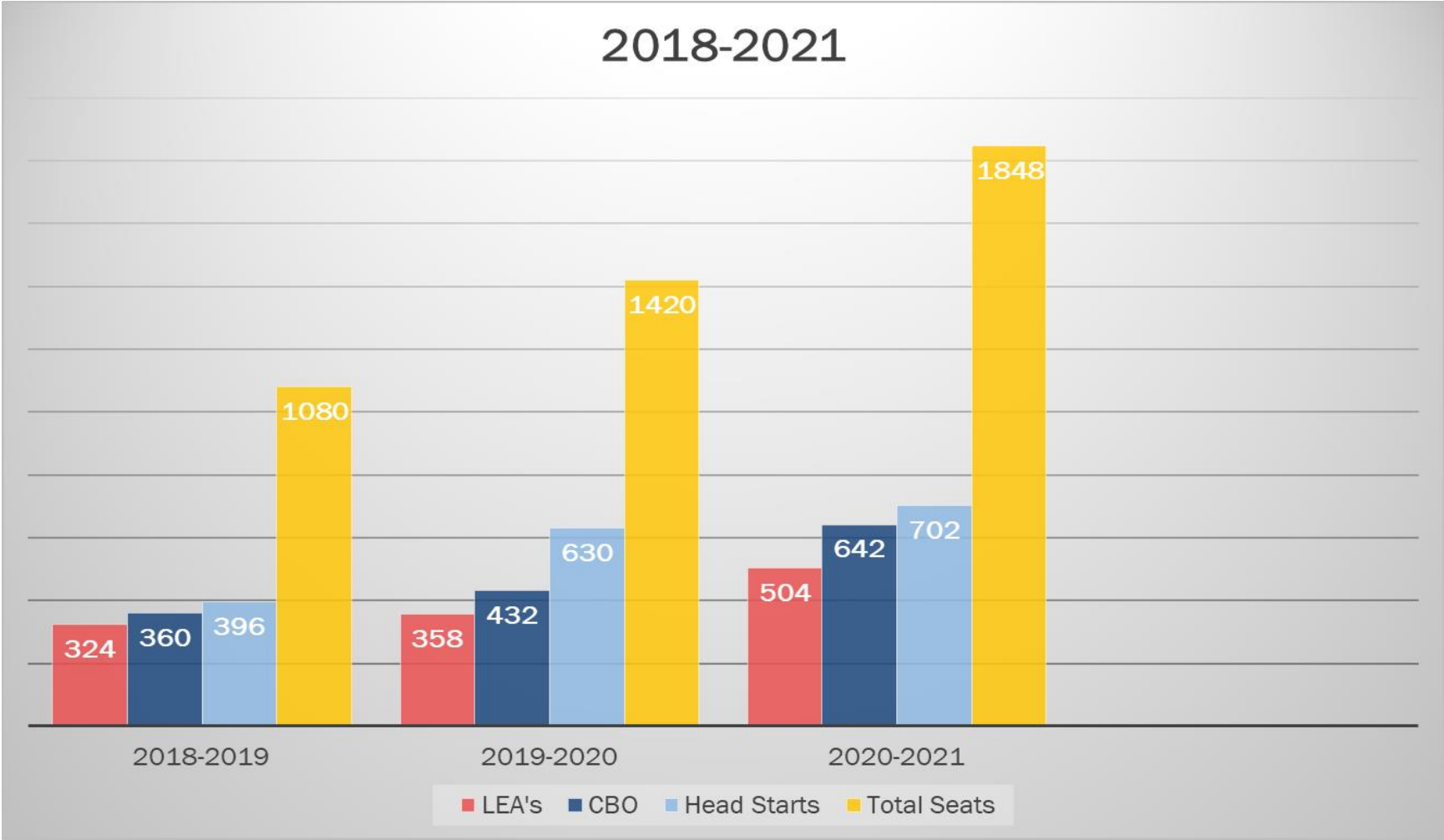
\*\*\* All expenditures include state spending as well as current operating expenditures.

Source: NIEER, The State of Rhode Island, 2019, adjusted for inflation.



\*National Institute of Early Education and Research

# Rhode Island Pre-K Expansion



# Pilot Funding Models 2020-2021

## Model 2: Expand Head Start to full day + full year

The goal of the RI Pre-K Expansion for UPK in RI is to include all partners that are already offering high-quality Pre-K, even when it is funded through another state or federal agency to ensure a wide variety of options for families and to be mindful of market saturation. In order to be included in the 7,000 seats programs must meet the definition of RI Pre-K.

## Model 3: Head Start/RI Pre-K braided classroom

RI Pre-K seeks to build on the current Pre-K infrastructure in Rhode Island. Head Start is a valued partner in this work. Braiding funding allows for children of all social-economic backgrounds to participate in the same classroom.

## Model 4: CCAP Supplemental

Parent choice is an important part of the RI Pre-K and CCAP model. For programs, the inability to apply for an RI Pre-K classroom due to displacement may have been a barrier. This model allows for programs with classrooms that are not at maximum enrollment to supplement with enrollment from the lottery.

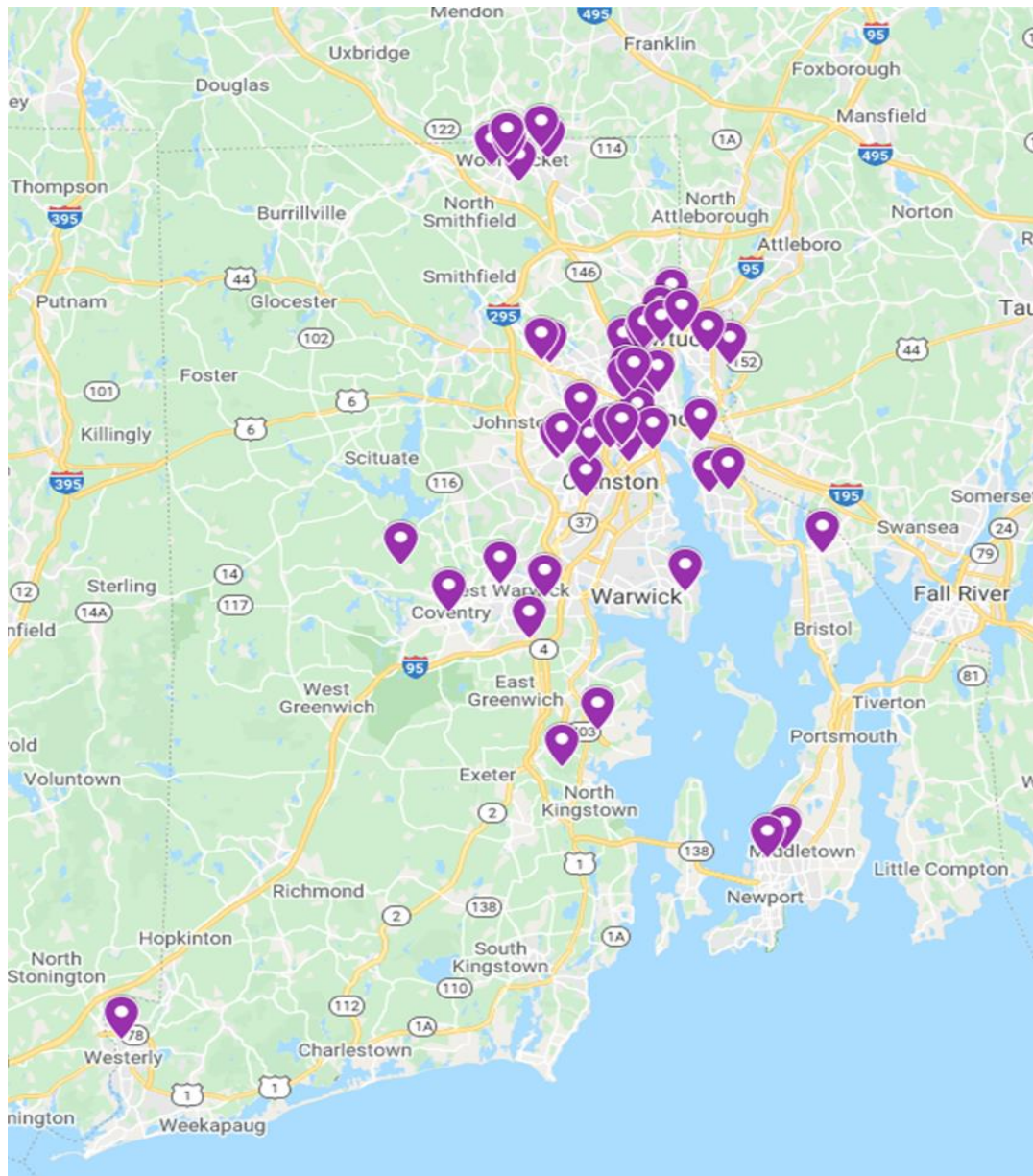
## Model 5: Transform Special Education Preschools to General Education RI Pre-K

Providing children with disabilities access to RI PreK is an equity issue. This would allow the subgroup to be given the same opportunities as their peers and reduce the readiness gap at kindergarten entry.

Blended funding would provide districts with the funds necessary to provide high quality RI PreK classrooms by supplementing the existing investment they receive through the funding formula.

Applications for the Traditional Funding Full Classroom Award (Model 1) are still being accepted along with the pilot models





## Current Rhode Island State Profile

RI Pre-K is currently in 16 school districts, operating 100 classrooms and costs \$17.850M in grants and quality support contracts.

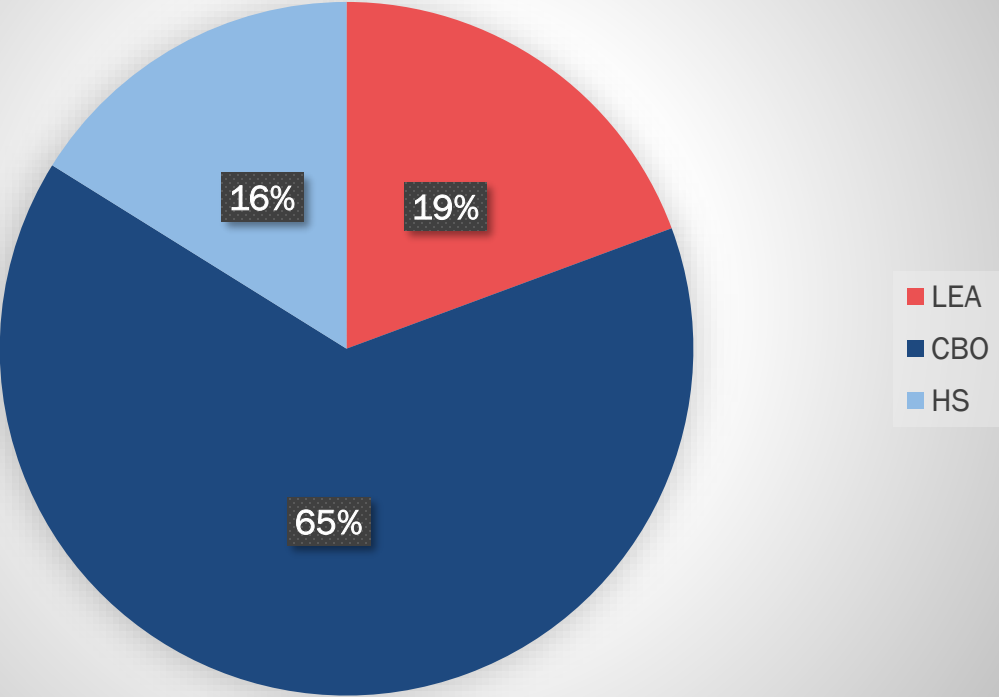
RIDE supports the programs with PD/TA, provided by The Center for Early Learning Professionals, SUCCESS, a ECMH program out of Bradley Hospital and on-going monitoring and guidance by the RIDE team.

With the introduction of the new funding models and the increased contribution through PDG B-5 Renewal Grant (\$1M) and GEER funding (\$2.5M over the next two years) the program is expected to grow by 300 seats and 2 communities in the 2021/2022 school year.

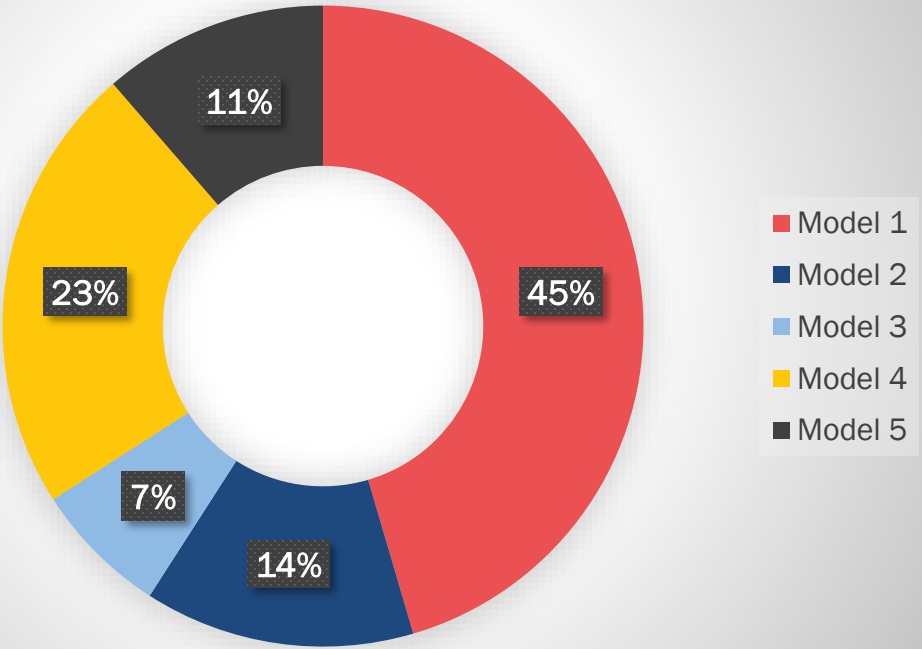


# Applications Received for 2021-2022 School Year

Delivery Model



Model Type





RHODE  
ISLAND

# Early Childhood Care and Education Strategic Plan

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Appendices

**Objective 3:** All four-year olds in Rhode Island have access to high-quality Pre-K, inclusive of parental choice and student needs.

**Strategy 1:** Establish a diverse and sustainable funding structure across state agencies to support the expansion of high-quality pre-k for all 4-year old children in Rhode Island.

ACTION STEPS	Timeline
Finalize and release RI Pre-K Grant Application for SY 22 and determine prioritization of vulnerable populations in the lottery process.	2021
Work with LEAs to develop long term transition plan to move LEA Pre-K classrooms to receiving funding through the funding formula as well as local supplemented funding.	In progress
Meet with LEAs to review impact of moving to Rhode Island's school funding formula and finalize a memorandum of understanding for moving to funding formula in FY 2021.	2021
Establish incentives and supports for school districts, alongside requirements for meeting and maintaining high-quality standards for classrooms	2021
Conduct short survey/focus group with Head Start programs to determine potential barriers to maintaining high-quality standards and utilizing multiple funding sources within their programs.	Complete
Work with Head Start programs to address any potential obstacles to meet the state's established high-quality pre-k standards.	In progress
Evaluate the feasibility of supplementing pre-k seats through blended funding.	2021
Evaluate the non-program expenses associated with RI Pre-K to identify the non-program per student funding needed (for example, delivering professional development and technical assistance, monitoring/evaluating progress, delivering mental health consultations, etc.) and identify cost savings for existing contracts when scaled.	2021

## Strategy 2: Increase the number of classrooms that meet high-quality pre-k standards

ACTION STEPS	Timeline
Analyze current needs and develop a plan for improving the quality of targeted programs serving the communities with our most vulnerable populations.	2021
Establish and support requirements for LEA programs currently funded through the state funding formula to attain high-quality standards for pre-k.	2021
Revise Comprehensive Early Childhood Education (CECE) regulations to ensure alignment with high-quality standards.	Complete
Provide quality grants or seed money to help programs achieve and/or maintain quality once achieved.	2021
Develop a model for assigning seats within a high-quality program through the lottery, as opposed to full classroom enrollment.	2021
Engage more LEA's, CBO's and Head Start programs in partnering with RI's Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) Itinerant Model, supporting children with differing abilities in Gen Ed classrooms.	2021
Support the General Education workforce, through education and technical assistance, as more children are placed in general education classrooms receiving the itinerant model	2021

**Strategy 3:** Attract, develop and retain a strong workforce of qualified and well-supported educators to both build a pipeline for future expansion needs and support the current demand.

ACTION STEPS	Timeline
Establish a pathway for the current workforce that will lead to PreK-2 certification.	2021
Coordinate with DHS, DOH and EOHHS to establish a streamlined professional development platform for early learning professionals.	In progress
Create content that will provide synchronous and asynchronous opportunities for professional learning in areas aligned to the needs of pre-k classrooms.	2021



# Grant Application Guide by Delivery Model

Provider Type	Model 1 Traditional Funding	Model 2 Pilot Head Start Expansion	Model 3 Head Start Braiding	Model 4 Pilot CCAP Supplemental	Model 5 Pilot LEA General Education
Community Child Care	●			●	
Head Start Agency	●	●	●		
Public School LEA	●				●